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1914

Moods and Fancies

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Moods and Fancies

By

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AUG 26 1914

Fly little Fancies this your sacred trust,
To brighten memories covered o'er with dust,
Charm a dull hour, a weariness beguile,
Warm a friend's heart and start the waiting smile.

Contents

PAGE

Celestial Amusement 9
The Bells of St. James 12
The Wind 15
On the Square 17
My Sweetheart is Dead 21
Mount Tynabo 22
A Valentine 24
Bugs 26
The Tenderfoot's Christmas 28
The Point of the Road 30
Discontented 32
One Variety 33
A Tribute 36
The Primrose's Lover 34
A Valentine 37
The Doctor 38
Our Star 41
The Soul of the Violin 42
Liberty Bell 44
Equal Suffrage 46
The Latest 48
By a Suit Case 50
Incense 52
Clouds 54
The Bowl 56
Daughter 59

Chicago 60
Nell 62
Cremation 64
To Miss M—— W. 65
Pneumatic Tires 66
'Twas Ever Thus 68
There is no God but God 72
? 75
Athanasia 76
Gods 78
Humanity and Destiny 82
Curtius 85
After Thought 101

Celestial Amusement

The Great Ones sat in company at the bounds of the starry world
They smiled as they watched the whirling spheres their arms of might had hurled,
Limitless void beyond them spread and a universe swirled before
And they smiled on a work so far finished, they smiled at its musical roar.

Then Mintung, the mighty, uttered a thought that gave the gods great cheer:
"Let us place on some sphere a creature that can both see and hear,
That can feel and taste and suffer and can know what it is 'to try'.
Let us place within his bosom—for we'll make him like you and I
A desire to learn of all he sees, the How, the When, and the Why
We can watch him try to comprehend the stars we have swung on high."

Then stately Tajung urged a thought to which the gods agree
That each confer a quality upon this thing "to be":
"Let us grant him strength and valor according to his needs,
Let us give him Love and Fancy as a spur to worthy deeds."
Callæsthitis dowered Beauty and each god gave a seed
Which flowered in humanity from Faith and Hope to Greed.

They chose a little flaming star and cooled it in their breath,
They clothed the sphere with verdure and blessed with Life and Death,
They nursed it for an eon 'till man had started fair,
They filled his heart with longings, they filled his mind with care,
They granted many virtues offset by many odds
And eyes to see all things except the features of the gods.

They breathed into his being a willingness to do,
They scribed upon his forehead the lines by which to hew,
And last they filled his bosom with strong desire to know;
Then tossed the sphere with man and brute among the stars below
And anchored it unto a sun within the central throng
And watched the man grope after Truth and find it or go wrong;
And endless rapture warms the gods and heaven's applause swells wide
When man blasts out another Truth and makes it his with pride.

The Bells of St. James

Far up within the tower,
Shouting forth with brazen power
Are the bells with saintly names,
Are the bells of our Saint James,
Twenty metal throats sonorous
Joined in one grand mellow chorus.
Bells have rung in every nation,
Bells have rung in every station,
Man ever will be governed by their tone.
Not alone those in subjection
Nor for those who crave protection
But as well for kindly rulers on their throne.

Ye will tell as bells have told
In past centuries dim and old
Human joy and human sorrow by your chime,
You will toll out war's distress
Measured to our mental stress
Ringing joyous o'er success. Thou'rt sublime.
Ye have duties, do them well,
Shout aloud a people's gladness,
O'er a wedding ring to madness,
May you have but few to knell.
Guide and lead man in his blindness
Give thy voice to human kindness
Let thy mission be in fine
All good, human and divine.

Ave Marie, sound is faintly
Full of sweet suggestion saintly
Turning men to prayer,
But with bolder tone and manner
Fling the loved Star-Spangled Banner
To the air.
My Country, peal the song
Ring it often loud and long
Till the chords of every part
Reach and thrill each listening heart,
Till all feel the rich devotion
Of the brazen bells in motion,
Throbbing out an invocation,
Blending praise with supplication,
Pouring forth upon the air
A great nation's mighty prayer.
Forever thou shalt warn man in thy knelling,
Forever shalt thou throb in sweetly telling
Of heavenly love,
Forever shall thy music ease affliction,
Forever shalt thou voice a benediction
From above.

Far up within the steeple
High above the listening people
Are the bells with saintly names,
Are the chimes of our Saint James,
Twenty voices joined in chorus
Twenty brazen throats sonorous
Music pour,
Tongues of saints on high are singing,
Angels at the loud chimes ringing
Open to the chant are swinging
Heaven's door.

The Wind

The delicate zephyr that plays with the rose,
Bathing itself in its fragrance and goes
On kissing each flower and shaking each leaf,
Creeping along as still as a thief,
Now lifting the hair from the brow of a lass
Who stoops for a violet hid in the grass,
Now buoying the petals it scatters so free
As they fall from the blossoms that cling to the tree.
Now and then, here and there, in the meadow or wood,
'Tis the wandering wind in its gentler mood.

Oh the wind, the wild rollicking wind
That blows where it listeth and none know its mind,
It scatters the leaves and it hustles the bird,
It drives the poor clouds through the sky in a herd,
The grass bows before it, the flower hides in fright
And the trees shake their limbs in the breath of his
might.
He wraps his strong arms 'round the maid on her way,
He blows in her face and he tells her to stay,
His embraces are rough and his kisses lack art
But wherever he goes he acts well his part
On ocean or prairies, on inland or bay
'Tis the rollicking wind on his mischievous way.

Oh the wind, the wild maddened gale,
That scatters the snow storm and hurtles the hail,
It tears through the canyons and roars in the pass,
Snaps the huge mountain tree like a dry blade of grass,
Plows the ocean to furrows and bathes in the spray
That it hurls toward the sky as it sweeps on its way,
There is terror before it, destruction behind
And the voice of a demon is heard in the wind.
Whenever it roars and the billows roll high,
Where trees fall before it and whole forests sigh,
Where faces turn pale as the foam they have scanned
And the eye on the ocean is strained for the land,
Wherever it may be may heaven be kind
'Tis the wild angry mood of the wandering wind.

Strange it is man is so like the varying wind;
In his moods he is gentle, protecting and kind,
He is strong and courageous, triumphant and brave,
'Tis the soul of an angel and not of a slave,
But when passions have conquered, Hell doth not
contain
One devil more fiendish than man when insane.

On the Square

There aint no wimmin in this tale because that none were there,
It's just a Western shooting scrap conducted on the square,
No hero, but all villains and they were plenty bad,
No smiles or tears, no hopes or fears and nobody was sad.

It happened in Nevada, Alpha was the lonely spot,
This was early in the eighties—everything's now gone to rot.
There was sagebrush all 'round Alpha, rocks and sand, lye and clay
And the blizzards roared in winter and the sun cooked things in May.
The houses there at Alpha numbered one and nothing more
It was hotel, ginmill, college, station, church and general store.
An Italian dago ran the place and claimed to own the ground;
He manufactured all the booze for thirty miles around,
He burned charcoal for the smelters at Eureka miles away
And the axes of his choppers were busy night and day.

His little book showed later when the gov'ment did appear
That his pinion pine theft tactics netted fifty thou a year.

There aint no love in this here tale because that none was there,
It's where a bronco buster and a teamster fit for fair,
And I a nineteen-year-old kid were present on the spot
And I can tell the story from the sass up to the shot.

Black Jersey druv the dago's team of twenty-four big mule
He 'lowed that Bronco Peter's dad was a hoss thief and a fool
And Bronco Peter knew 'twas true but Greaser's blood is fire
And he allowed that Jersey was a Gringo and a liar.
Then Peter swung onto his hoss and his riato swung
He run his pinto up and back and jumped a wagon tongue,
He kept a pulling at his flask and gitting up his steam
Until his face were black and bad—he surely did look mean.
Black Jersey sat upon the porch you bet he didn't mope
His knife were ready and his eye glued to that Greaser's rope

Just then the Chinee cookee banged the triangle for chuck
And the dago made a little speech and wished the scrappers luck;
But, says he, you cannot eat inside; you'll shoot the place to smash,
Go eat in cookee's kitchen he's a-slinging of your hash,
And so Black Jersey and Gay Pete walked in there side by side
A-watching o' each other as we knew they loved their hide.
The grub was on the table and the places just across
And when they settled to that bench things was an even toss.
Two Bitts, the Chinee cookee, fell flat without a yap
When he saw that both his boarders had a gun upon the lap.
We held our breath and waited—then came the sudden crack
That told us only one white man were living in that shack.
We rushed to find Black Jersey a-eating cool as fate
While Bronco Peter's bleeding head were laying in his plate.
They both had watched each other and both had moved the same
And Jersey were alive because the Greaser were to blame.

Pete got a little nervous and when he raised, we jedge,
The muzzle of his cannon caught on the table edge
And Jersey let him have it just plumb between the eyes.
At Alpha there's a square of fence; well, there's where Peter lies.
This aint no tale of sentiment because that none were there
It's just a rough song of the times and what the West called square.

My Sweetheart is Dead

Oh, how can our brothers still traffic and sing,
Oh, how can the Sun still make day;
When a spirit so fair
Has passed into air
And her beautiful body to clay?
Earth has lost her forever
Death means forever.
Oh, how can the children still play?

The ground that she trod is holy and sweet
And sacred the grasses that kissed her dear feet,
Ah, blessed is the flower
That grows by her bower
And precious her loved rustic seat.
She has left them forever,
The tomb means forever
And death makes life's volume complete.

My sweetheart is dead. The sunlight streams down
On the white marble face of her tomb;
My heart has turned sere
With a terrible fear
Oh, I never shall see her again.
Ah, never, ah, never,
She has left me forever
I never shall see her again.

Mount Tynabo

(NEVADA)

Oh thou fair mountain on whose pearly crest
The first faint ray of dawning finds its rest,
Pure in thy glistening surplice of the snow,
Enchanting when the rosy clouds aglow
With the first flush of morning crowns thy peak,
And the white mists within thy hollows seek
Some place upon thy generous breast to shade
Their ghost-like forms that soon must shrink and fade.

In the bright midday when the scorching heat
Shrivels the flower beside my dusty feet
And the sweet birds that from the sage brush gray
Trilled to the earliest light their gladsome lay
Are stilled and with drooped wings are panting now
Beneath the densest shade of cedar bough,
Afar in azure space thy fairy height
In dreamlike splendor glistens in the light.

At the red sunset when the evening breeze
Bears from thy sides the odor of thy trees
And tinkling train and creaking dusty cart
Down the steep trail bring fragments of thy heart,
The panting herds stand in the deepening shade
Or in thy ice-born torrents slowly wade,
Lo! on thy cloud-like peak I see a light
And Venus, queen of evening, crowns the height.

Or at the midnight, 'neath a starless heaven,
Wild with dark clouds that by the blasts are driven,
I stand and gaze if I may gain perchance
By the wild lightning's glare an instant's glance
Of thy loved height, when lo! the changing sky
Clears to my vision and my eager eye
Sees the bright moon shine through the riven storm
Above thy crest and gild thy shadowy form,
Against the dark, deep, purple sky of night
See the fair mountain standing snowy white
Outlined with silver with thy crest ablaze
Above a rosy heaven of glowing haze.

Glory of glories, joy of joy I feel,
Thrilled with the grandeur mutely I stand and steal
A glimpse of Nature worshiping and know
As oft I had surmised from this low sod
Thou art fair Nature's altar to her God.

A Valentine

In the mountains ages and ages old
That lie in pride a towering mass,
In a dark, deep canyon grim and cold
Where the black, smooth boulders wall the pass,
A little spring from the barren wall
Bubbles up and babbles along,
'Round many a bend, o'er many a fall,
Now rushing with madness, now humming a song,
Now whirling a waltz in a stony pool
With a vagabond leaf all sere and brown
Ever sparkling and ever cool
It breaks away and dashes down,
Leaping on to the valley below
Where the orange and lemon and fig trees grow;
On and on through the fertile vale
It whispers ever a wonderful tale

To the palm and the gum and the pepper tree,
To the traveller who drinks of its waters free
It whispers ever the tale of its birth
'Tis a song of gladness and gentle mirth,
It tells of the snow that lies at rest
So bright and cold on the mountain's crest
"I am cold" it says "but colder still
Is my parent the snow on the lofty hill.

I am pure," it says, "but look at the snow,
'Tis the purest thing that Earth doth know."
So the stream sings on now loud, now low
Not of itself but of the snow.

Oh, might I send a message so bright
That it would tell of its source aright,
If it causes a thrill it tells of a throb
If it brings a tear its source was a sob,
If warm with affection the words it expressed
Judge, judge of the passionate love in my breast.

Oh messenger, fly on this bright lovers' morn
And see that this missive of love is well borne,
Far, far to the maid who rules over my heart,
Rules by her beauty, rules by her art,
Rules by a method that none can divine
But still she has conquered this spirit of mine.
Tell her in whisper and tell her aloud,
Tell her in sunshine and tell her in cloud
Utter it ever while she is afar
Tell her I love her wherever we are.
No, rather, tell her in words what appeal
The strength and the warmth of affection I feel
So when in the future no longer apart
She may judge how much weaker the tongue than the
heart.

Bugs

A dear little bug lived under a stone
And he was dejected, forlorn and alone
A sweet lady bug to whom he would sing
Now smiled on another, he got the cold wing.
He was a brown bettle, she red, spotted black
While his rival was gold all over his back,
So you see the brown lover was left in the cold
When he came to contend with the beetle of gold.
The brown bug had sung his most beautiful whir
And had shown off his speed till his wings were a blur;
He had clasped his antennæ in prayer from afar
But all he could see was the back of his star.
The beetle of gold was chilly though fair,
By birth a patrician, his look was a stare;
His atmosphere haughty, his manner was bold,
He acted and felt like a beetle of gold.
I had a strange pang for the little brown thing;
He was active and loving and willing to sing.
As lady bugs sometimes, so I have been told,
Will neglect a true love for the glitter of gold
I decided to aid so far as I could
The lady to smile on the lover that wooed.
With paint from my palette the gold I made black
And the brown one I gilded all over his back;
He continued his prayer, he stuck to his song
And the fair, spotted flirt saw she had been wrong,

She gave a faint smile, her antennæ she fanned,
The whole scene revolved just as 'twas planned,
The brave and the true won the fickle and fair
While the once golden beetle took flight in the air.
It was human, amusing, instructive and right
A Providence meddled with finger of might.

A moral is dangerous, futile and crude
But this we can say—to the high—don't be rude,
To ladies—take care the glitter may fade,
To lovers—get rich but stick to the maid.

The Tenderfoot's Xmas

This here's a tale of Christmas, of a Christmas that I spent
Enjoying of a present that my loving mother sent,
But she's the only female that'll figger in this tale
And she was just three thousand miles way by railroad rail.

Ma figgered that her present was one 'twould surely suit
For she sent me on for Christmas a lovely robe de nuit,
Embroidered down the bosom, a pocket on the breast,
So clean and sweet and wholesome, inviting me to rest.

Now there was just five others a-sleeping in that shack
And the way that they prepared for bed was rather somewhat slack,
Sometimes they took their hats off, sometimes it was their boots
But I never seen a single one a-wearing robe de nuits.

And so I laid for a surprise and waited for the crowd,
They came, full of Christmas whisky, a-cursing pretty loud
But when they seen my nighty they let a frightful yell
And pitched me from the cabin like a cinder shot from Hell.

I landed in a snowdrift, the thermometer was froze
And I would surely perish if I didn't get some clothes
So I lit for cookee's kitchen as swift as I could fly,
Sam Loo, the yellow peril, was frightened fit to die.

But finally he clothed me in his padded coat of mail
And I went back to the cabin a chink in all but tail,
However not until I'd hid that draggled robe de nuit
Behind the cookee's woodpile, 'neath a giant cedar root.

Next day a Winnamucca buck came begging of some chuck,
It couldn't have been Friday as he'd had a piece of luck,
He came, striding through the snowdrifts, he was certainly a beaut,
For he wore, Oh Blessed Angels, my lovely Robe de Nuit

The Point of the Road

A child he stood by the farmhouse gate
Bare toes in the white dust spread
And gazed afar down the road to the West
Where the shining pathway led,
Over the log bridge spanning the brook,
Where the clattering reapers mowed,
To where tall trees hemmed in the path
Far away to the point of the road.

And he yearned to go where it dwindled and shrunk
And tapered away to naught
For they told him that there he would find great things
Of gold a well-filled pot,
A beautiful maiden was waiting him there,
The wonders of earth there showed,
So he longed and dreamed and resolved to go
Some day to the point of the road.

As a blushing youth he bade good-by
To the farm where the meadows spread
And bravely strode away to the West
Where the shining pathway led.
In time he found a loving face
And a pot that with gold o'erflowed
But dim and azure and distant still
His gaze sought the point of the road.

Perhaps the spirit that guards the tomb
Is the maid of his childhood's tale,
Perhaps the buttercup's golden gloss
Is the treasure to fill his pail,
Perhaps the low green temple
Holds wonders that life ne'er showed
For here all pathways dwindle and fade
Here, here lies the point of the road.

Discontented

Oh, tell me why in this life we miss
The superlative joy, the superlative bliss
Of getting the finest, of owning the best,
When we easily win so much of the rest.

The largest of fishes slip from our line,
The shattered glass held the oldest wine,
The loveliest faces but brighten our dreams,
And the bushes still hold our bird, it seems.

Our regular diet is lemons and whey
For the best that there is never comes our way.
Just answer this question—yes, make it a bet,
That the sweetest of kisses are those you can't get.

One Variety

She gave him a kiss 'twas as airy
As the down on the Summer's breeze
'Twas as sweet as the dew in the nectored blooms
Of the fragrant cherry trees,
'Twas as light and pure as a vagrant flake
That heralds the doom of Fall,
'Twas only a kiss from a blushing Miss
A kiss—yes, that was all.

It made him very dizzy,
It went to his head like wine,
It whelmed him o'er like the ocean hoar
When he hurls his ranks of brine,
His iron knees weakened and trembled
Like blades of wind-swept grass
When he felt the airy, fragrant FROST
In the kiss of a blushing lass.

The Primrose's Lover

Down in the old garden, beside the still pool,
Where is heard the soft song of the fountain's low splashing,
Where the grass groweth green and the shadows are cool,
And the dew on the ivy in sunlight is flashing.

Where the stone walls are hidden with moss and with vine,
Where the long narrow paths to new pleasures are leading,
Where the great climbing rose doth its neighbor entwine
And the tips of the daisies forever are bleeding.

There, there where the manor house peeps through the green
Of great oak and lime trees that tower above it;
There, there where nature displayeth her sheen,
A bee saw a primrose, to see was to love it.

Down on the damp mosses, close to the clear waters,
On a shore that the ripples were ever caressing,
Grew the gentlest, most modest of nature's sweet daughters—
A primrose that breezes were ever addressing.

Poised in the clear air the bee hung at gaze,
His swift wings keep time to discoveries wild thrilling,
He drops closer still to the rose, love ablaze—
The flower hangs her head and he thinks she is willing.

She trembles and nods as he touches her face,
She bows down and sheds diamond dew that adorns her;
Her petals draw back from his garments of lace,
And she chides the poor breezes not having forewarned her.

He pressed the first kiss of a fresh love upon her,
He touched her drooped petals with gentlest caresses,
She shrinks with the thought of her virtue, her honor—
But outpouring fragrance her pleasure confesses.

Exploring her charms with many a sweet kiss,
And from her pale breast his own breath perfuming,
Till dizzy with loving and senseless with bliss,
He falls from her arms in ecstasy swooning.

So in the old garden, beside the still pool,
The flowers of the Springtime are trembling and blushing,
The primrose awaits, where the shadows are cool,
The return of her lover so gentle, so gushing.

A Tribute

Down on my life, light-footed, fair, she came, in sooth
Radiant as habitant of some pure sphere,
Kissed my dull brow and waked a sense to hear
A spirit whispering words of love and truth.
Till now my very life had been uncouth
Except She came to make my vision clear,
My soul knew not the worth of smile or tear
Ceaseless I felt the throbbing heart of youth
Give to me comfort, sympathy and joy,
Right to the center thrilled the rich warm kiss,
Enough of heaven she brought to mold Earth's clay,
Gave love enough to make god Cupid cloy.
Oh, how can mortal yield such such heavenly bliss?
Richer am I since she has passed this way.

A Valentine

I send you no printed stock fiction
But speak from a heart that is true,
My soul seeks to show its devotion
And burns all its incense to you.
My love is as deep as the ocean,
My love is as broad as the sky,
I have had many girls in my lifetime
Perhaps I'll have more e'er I die
But my dearest, my darling, believe me,
Love to-day means just this, You and I.

The Doctor

Within a quiet chamber beside a couch of dread
A Doctor sits with patient strength to rescue from the dead.
A striped, white-capped lieutenant glides to his every call,
He notes the pulse, he notes the breath and ponders over all.
With potent crystals from strange herbs he aids the faltering heart,
With hissing gases from dark tanks he whispers of his art,
With applications cooling he soothes the fevered brow
And guides his course and deals his help midst panic, tear and vow,
Until relieving dews bedeck a swiftly cooling face,
The prize is his, the battle o'er, 'tis he has won the race.
With sage advice and kindly smile he seeks a brief repose,
Then sallies forth with godlike soul to conquer human woes.

In an alabaster chamber beneath the clustered lamps
Upon a crystal table a senseless human pants,
The stupefying ether has vanquished pain and fear
And the white-gowned waiting surgeon with willing aid draws near.
With glittering blade and artful hand he finds the injured part,
Dissects with skill, ablates with wit and works with speed and art.
Sutures the ruptured entrail, withdraws the festering gall,
Removes the growth, does all with care and then repairs the wall.
Returning conscience gains at length sway in the waking brain
And hope and joy ascend the throne usurped by dread and pain.
With sage advice and kindly smiles that comfort and compose
He sallies forth with godlike soul to conquer human woes.

So here is a song to the Doctor, a sketch of the fighting M. D.
Who gives of his life that others may live, who slaves so others are free.
A word to strengthen a weak one, a little advice to the strong,
No look of reproach at the failures, no morals to those who do wrong.
Just sympathy, comfort and patience, with wisdom and justice and art,
With courage and strength and endurance, with mercy and kindness and heart.
Not least in a peace with its plenty, not last in a war with its dole
And the welfare of the nations is the purpose of his soul.
So hail to the Red Cross Captain—grant honor and prestige and gain
For he wars against the darts of Death and strips the barbs from Pain
And long may he honor his mission and long may he struggle for men
Till History shouts forth his glory forever and ever. Amen.

Our Star

When I think of the lovers of ancient days,
Of the phantoms that kissed and sighed,
Of words that were spoken by lips now dust,
Of hearts that throbbed in fearless trust,
Of the beings that loved and died;

When I think how the gods have written fair
Of the loves of old in the heavens high
And that stars will sing the ages through
Of hearts that were strong and fond and true
I ask—What of you and I?

But I know that somewhere is a little world
Unnamed, unfamed and afar
That will glisten bright on some brilliant night
When you and I have passed from sight
And have joined in our waiting star.

The Soul of the Violin

Three Sirens upon a rocky cape
O'erlooking a turbulent sea
Once sang together
In every weather
For they were happy and free.

And sailors hearing their song drew near
Forgetting their duty, forgetting their fear,
All forgetting together
The rocks and the weather
For the singing so sweet and clear.

The coast was strewn with corpses white
And with wrecks once the Ocean's pride
But they sang together
In every weather
Sitting there side by side.

Till Jove from out the cloudy throne
Sent forth a bolt of flame
And they died together
In stormy weather
But their voices are still the same.

Soft and low as the voice of the wind
Whispering in sylvan bowers
In all kinds of weather
They sing together
In shine or Summer shower.

Like the voice of the sea they heard so long
Thundering in caverns deep
They sing together
In every weather
And their songs still make men weep.

Sweet is the song of the Siren souls
Doing their pennance for sin
In the delicate shell,
Their plutonian cell,
Best known as the violin.

Liberty Bell

Oh the Bell, Freedom's Bell,
What a story it doth tell,
How it rang a nation's birth,
How it tolled a tyrant's knell
Ringing 'round the quiet Earth
Rousing echoes that still dwell.
How the ancient ringer rang,
How the throbbing metal sang,
How ten thousand bayonets flashing,
How ten thousand sabers clashing
With a thousand cannon crashing
Answered back the brazen warning
In the light of Freedom's morning,
Of the Bell.

Oh the Bell, Freedom's Bell,
Voiceless now it still doth tell
How in victory oft its tolling
Woke a nation's frightful yell
And its music seaward rolling
Shook the thrones where monarchs dwell.
How of Independence telling
While its tones were loudest swelling
Voiceless it became but Glory
Draped its form and shouts its story
And the Bell though seamed and hoary,
Its prophetic motto showing,
Louder still the song is growing
Of the Bell.

Equal Suffrage

We are marching on to conquest a hundred million strong,
The battle is for might of right against the might of wrong,
We will give to Vice a lacing so she'll never more be free,
We'll bottle Old John Barleycorn so he no more can spree,
We'll clean the dirty corners in the house of Politics
And prove a worthy purpose can defeat a thousand tricks.
We'll fight till every spear shall show a worn and polished shaft,
Till we've freed the slaves of Cunning and ringed the snout of Graft.

And when the war is over and when the good work's done,
When all our flags are flying o'er the strongholds we have won,
When the rustle of the ballot is no longer in our ears,
When are hushed the yells of victims, when are hushed the victor's cheers,
Then we soldiers of the nations will sheath the ready sword,
Still as mothers, wives, and sweethearts we will join the council board,
Each will guard the general welfare with a noble heart and tried,
Each will feel the warmth of triumph, each will blush with joy and pride
When man greets her with a handclasp and spells words the World will read:
Women win through Love and Courage what mankind had lost through Greed.

The Latest

There's a darling pink-faced baby come to squeeze
into our home
There's a crowd of us already so he'll never be alone,
We are poor but we are loving, we will scheme and
we will plan,
Each will give things to the other, we will do the best
we can.

Bobbie's sox will do for baby, Willie's shoes almost
fit Bob,
Tommie's pants look well on Willie, Uncle's hat will
shield his knob.
Father's meerschaum goes to uncle, father can use
granddad's snuff
We will all give to each other so the baby'll have
enough.

Minn'll give the kid her ribbons, Kate'll give her
gloves to Minn,
Sister Sue's veil goes to Katie though she hates to
give like sin,
Mother's stays will soon fit sister, ma can use dear
grandma's muff
Oh, we really do not matter so the baby has enough.

But next time a pink-faced stranger comes straggling
into town
Let us hope he'll bring his mittens and his sox and
one spare gown,
And if he can't bring his luggage let us hope there'll
be no more,
Or that coming in the darkness he will tap another
door.

By a Suit Case

I once was the hide on a little red bull,
With a fine pair of horns and hair long as wool,
That went at six cents at the end of his trail,
And they yanked off his skin in two jerks of a tail.
I was sprinkled with salt, thrown into a hole,
Which magical process brought pride to my soul,
For at six on the hoof I felt humble and blue
But a sprinkle of salt made me worth twenty-two.
I went to the tanner's who took off my hair,
I felt most immodest to find myself bare.
Though I blushed for myself, my hair had worse shocks,
For 'twas made up into a pair of felt socks
That keep warm and cosy each beautiful leg
Of a dear little teacher in far Winnepeg.
I trust and I pray that some day I may clasp
A woman's white togs beneath my strong hasp—
You'll pardon the wish, my heart is so full,
And remember my sex—I once was a bull.

The tanner he turned me with many a curse—
He vowed he'd seen few that were very much worse;
He soaked and he scraped me without and within
Till he'd soaked out the ghost of original sin.
After ages of soaking, of strangling, of grief,
I came to the light. Yes, it was a relief;
But then I was rollered and beaten and cut,
I was shrunken to half, but tough as a nut.
At last I changed hands and belonged to a Jew,
Who got me rock bottom, at price forty-two.
He ordered me made into what I am now,
For which I am thankful, my pride you'll allow—
When you learn I am worth as much, yes, alas,
As the little red bull when he munched the long grass.

I have entered my life, have made my debut;
You be careful of me, I'll be faithful to you,
We'll travel together both empty and full,
But we'll never behave like the little red bull.

Incense

Some gentlemen keep on their private shelf
Beside razor and bottle of booze
A poem that somebody wrote on love,
Some withered flowers, a wrinkled glove
And a pair of gilded shoes.

No keepsakes have I of former days,
No ribbons or gloves or lace
But often when there's an idle hour
I can conjure well, for I have the power,
A smile, a form or a face.

For my soul like a wizard keeps in his den
Some vials of rare old glass
That hold the vintage of former years,
The glances of eyes, the glint of tears
And the fragrance of loves that pass.

These vials have stopples graven well
To the features of some fair face
With tresses of auburn, black or tow
So at a glance one well can know
Which is Violet, Lily or Grace.

I close my eyes, the doors of my soul,
And breathe of a vial and then
I whisper and smile and court and bow
Living over a love that I once did vow
Because I'm in love again.

There's one small vial crowned with Franc
That makes me giddy and coy
My face grows pink, my feet are bare
And I wriggle and twist in my great arm chair
Because it has made me a boy.

So there in rows in the den of my soul
In vials that glisten and gleam
Is the attar of Nelly, of Mabel, of Kate,
The essence of Love, the assays of Fate
And the incense for many a dream.

Clouds

At the black midnight when the clouds are riven
By the mad wind and through the sky are driven
While the artillery of heaven roars loud
And lightning spears flash forth from cloud to cloud,
Demons seem loosed, Plutonian powers hold court,
Geni and Titan join in awful sport,
Strife, war, destruction, anger, pain and death
Whirl o'er the planet, life is but a breath,
Hades seems real and Heaven but a tale,
Evil triumphant reigns while angels pale.

In the fair dawning when the early light
Pales the low East, the cloud maids greet the sight.
Faintly at first their pearly heads they raise
To breathe the matin of their daily praise,
Seeing their king they glow with joy and pride
And each one dons the drapery of a bride,
As that majestic sultan, Sol the proud,
Struts through his palace, every maid, a cloud,
Bows low and blushes, smiles and makes a way
To glorify the coming of the day.

Or at the evening clustered in the West
The cloud throng gently give the Earth to rest,
Mellowed or gorgeous in the sinking Sun
They hold the record of a day now done.
Some pale with fear, some ruddy with fond joy,
Some bright with hope, some dull with strange annoy
Gathered about the bright and awful throne
They wait for benefice or to atone
And with the clouds we join the mighty laud
And almost feel the presence of our God.

The Bowl

Old as the mists of creation,
New as the first blush of day
With tinkle and clink, with glitter and glint
This is the Salad Bowl's lay.

Lashed in the flames of formative Earth,
Cooled by the down-raining seas,
Powdered and cut in the glacier's rut,
Riding the wind to be free.

Crushed by the dinosaurs slimy,
Fanned by the flukes of the whale,
Tossed by the huge hairy mammoth,
Swept by the crocodile's tail.

Shrouding the bones of the mighty,
Drinking the blood of the slain,
Dashing like darts in the whirlwind,
Quietly laid by the rain.

Thus throughout numberless ages,
Ages of peace and of strife,
Deluged old ocean unhindered,
Struggled the land into life.

Then came the fire of man's fury
The flame of his merciless skill
It was like to primitive ages
When God was working his will.

When the cold mists whirled to flaming
And the flames congealed to stone
But I knew this littler, selfish God
Would shape me for his own.

'Twas thus by his short, sharp fury
A miracle came to pass
And the sands of countless ages
Came forth as a bowl of glass.

He cut and polished and shaped me
As I shrieked as if in pain
But he paid no heed for 'twas his creed
To write the pattern plain.

And when he had wrought and polished
To the joy of his skillful heart
He smiled in pride on my glittering side
And pronounced me a work of art.

Once I was nebulous nothing,
Now I am pertified dew,
Once I was molten rock seething
Now I hold cool things for you.

Yes I am crystallized rainbow,
Finished the work long begun
And I feel new delight as I play with the light
Of my larger twin brother the Sun.

Daughter

Whose girl are you? I ask of a maid
Who sits upon my knee.
Whose girl are you? I ask again
Of my little one of three,
She leans away for she loves to tease,
And soberly answers—"Oh, somebody's."

And who is this fortunate somebody
Who owns such a dear little dove?
Who gets your kisses? who hears your tales?
Who is it has your love?
Then back she comes with laughing eyes
And shouts "Papa" as a great surprise.

Then I hug my fair little sweetheart
With a great, strong, bearlike squeeze
And perhaps 'tis a trifle too rough for the mite
For she smotheringly begs release
But I can't help being rough at the time
For I know that the day will be
When her answer to "Whose girl are you?"
Will not 'specially indicate me.

Chicago

Queen of the western prairies, gem of the inland sea
Our hearts and voices join in loyal praise to thee,
Exiled upon a foreign shore or nestled at thy breast
We're proud of our great mother and sing with love and zest:

Chorus.

Chicago! Oh Chicago! Shrine of a nation's heart,
We love thee and we feel that in thee we have a part;
Far, far among the peoples the quickened pulses thrill
When is seen the shining legend, the glorious words, "I Will."

Where once the glowing embers lighted thy second birth
There lofty walls of marble hold the trophies of the Earth,
There granite halls of learning are like jewels in thy crown
And the billowy clouds of commerce enfold thee like a gown.

Thou sittest like noble Ceres 'midst harvest's garnered
worth,
The iron steeds of traffic bear thy bounties o'er the
Earth,
In every distant valley, deep in the treasured hills
Our brothers toil to fill the call of all thy roaring mills.

Thine is the voice of millions, the never-ceasing wheel,
Thine is the midnight flamings of molten lakes of steel,
Thine is the beacon warning the endless transports
home
And thine the meed of glory wherever man may roam.

The azure water of the lake that pours about thy feet,
The pure and constant breezes that aid the homing
fleet,
The temples with their thousand spires, the sylvan
nooks for rest
All build thy fame and make thy name now and for-
ever blest.

Nell

When I was but a laddie among the hills of green
'Twas there I met a lassie who became my young heart's queen.
How her blue eyes could sparkle, her cheek was like a shell
And I loved her and the darling I christened Pretty Nell.
But when I told her of my love she ceased her childish play
Her eyelids drooped, she hung her head and frowned and ran away.

A man, I journeyed to her home, my love had made me bold,
The flaxen hair had darkened, her head was crowned
Her blue eyes sparkled just the same, her lips were just as sweet
But Nellie was a woman from her glory to her feet
And there among the hills of green I told my love that day
But Nellie blushed, her eyelids fell, she smiled and turned away.

Now I am old and wrinkled, few left to call me Bill,
I dwell within a palace and servants do my will
And had I searched a million worlds through all the years of life
I could not find another like Nell to be my wife.
Whene'er I whisper of my love or talk about that day,
Dear Nellie wipes her glasses and smiles and turns away.

Cremation

All men are equal at the end
For when they come to die
The pauper old
And the king with his gold
Are food for the buzzing fly

The maggot, the shark, the burrowing rat,
The buzzard and stealthy mold
Begin the work
Which they never shirk
When the heart of man turns cold.

No dark, damp, airless grave be mine,
No scavengers or mire,
But give my weight
To the flaming grate
So it vanisheth in fire.

The clean, lean, greedy, willing flames
Yea bid them be my shroud
And do not slave
To deck my grave,
Throw kisses at a cloud.

To Miss M_____ W_____

A maiden once had in her darkest interior
An organ marked A. that was warped and inferior.
It would gas, it would sass
And the experts declared that it never had class.
So they went at the maiden with vim and with ardor
And cut a small window right into her larder
And there among chocolates and sundaes and gum
They found a string bean that was all on the bum.
They pickled it neatly in spirits of wine
And I wish that the maiden that had it were mine.

Pneumatic Tires

From the fluff of island cotton, the southland's
precious snow,
From the sap of tropic jungles where the Orinocos
flow,
From where smoking, rumbling craters threaten man
and shake the Earth
There our elements of being grow and flow and have
their birth.

The skill of human fingers, the craft of human skill,
Mix and blend the sap and brimstone with the snowy
cotton drill,
Shape and mold and form and fashion with a miracle
of art
Till the parts are made a unit and the unit has no
parts.

In quadruplets forth we trundle for conquest and for mirth
Filled with the breath of heaven we will spin around the Earth,
With the strength of sixty horses we spurn the level road,
We need no gentle urging, we need no cruel goad.

Like hounds upon the quarries' trail our music is the horn,
Like lions in the desert our fear the wayside thorn,
Like eagles on spread pinions as silent, swift and free
And the reason for our being is the joy we bring to thee.

'Twas Ever Thus

As he strolled along the sands of Time
By Life's shining river aflow
He found a Naiad of wondrous grace
With tear stains marring her beautiful face
And a spirit weary with woe.

Her words were but sobs, her posture despair,
Her breathings a sibilant sigh,
Her hair was disheveled, her garments awry,
Like a bird with wrecked pinions that never can fly
She lay as one dying and wished but to die.

He tried to comfort, to bring relief
To the stricken stranger with heart so sore,
To learn her sorrow, to end her fears,
To ease her pain and stop her tears
As she lay on the glistening shore.

At length in a voice that was all a moan
She told the tale of her grief;
How her Triton lover of late grown cold
Was paying court to a mermaid bold
Who dwelt in the coral reef.

Her sniffs became scattered and fewer her sobs,
As she listened she lessened her sighs,
She straightened her garments and twisted her hair
And deftly in every respect made repair
While sidelong she glanced with her eyes.

They talked and dallied the hours away
As they strolled through a shadowy grove
And he whispered words that a young man will say
When alone with a maid on a propitious day,
Yes, they simply were falling in love.

They parted at eve and greeted with joy
At the grove in the sparkling morn,
He gave her a pearl he had won at dawn
In a wagered race with a forest faun,
Her beautiful breast to adorn.

She praised his great triumph, with blushes and smiles
She gave him a generous kiss,
Their days were an ecstatic madness it seems,
Their slumber just thrilled with superlative dreams
And their life was a picture of bliss.

'Till one day came the Triton of wondrous mien
Like a breeze through the bowery vault
In search for the Naiad neglected of late
His love for the mermaid had suffered its fate,
Their temperaments were at fault.

His hair a green tangle of sedges and grass,
His garments a clutter of reeds,
While his skin was as white as the star-shine at night
Naught escaped the swift search of his eyes burning
bright
And his limbs were for valorous deeds.

He stopped his career at sound of a song
And harkened to voices that rang,
For the lovers sat there thigh to thigh, ear to ear,
A-singing their song, never dreaming of fear
And these are the words that they sang:

Oh, it's Love makes the World go 'round, dear,
It's Love makes the World go 'round;
Some think it is money that turns the gears,
Some think it spins faster if driven by fears
But Love is the petrol that whirls every spoke,
That kicks up the dust and puffs out the smoke
And it's Love, Love, Love that makes pain a joke,
For it's Love makes the World go 'round.

Oh, it's Love makes the World go 'round, dear,
It's Love makes the World go 'round;
Some think it's religion and some say it's work
But Love prays and toils and never will shirk,
It builds all our temples, it crowds all our marts,
It rears all the babies, then troubles their hearts,
And it urges us up in most difficult arts
For it's Love makes the World go 'round.

Triton's fair, puzzled forehead was clouded with hate
As he pounced on our hero with glee
And he yelled (Who is this that sits with you, Sis?)
(Was he trying to flirt? Did he offer to kiss?)
And she said with the look of an innocent miss;
(He's an absolute stranger to me).

There is No God but God

A painted medicine man stood up in the midst of a
buckskinned throng,
He grunted his grunt, he danced his dance, he chanted
his mystic song,
The feathered warriors nodded approval for his wail
When he uttered favoring omens of success for their
bloody trail,
They gave him food and raiment, they gave him of
praise full meed
And he reaped a mighty harvest as the fruit of his
little seed.

The Albert coated clergyman stood by his carven chair
He preached, he prayed, he chanted and tossed his
prophetic hair,
The broadclothed and sealskinned sinners listened in
smiles or tears
Whenever he gave them food for hope or rasped their
tender fears,
They gave him house and comfort, of gold a goodly
store
And in due time a week or so he preached and garnered
more.

The sons of men are brother fools, yea by the strength
of kin,
They pay the leech to suck their blood and take his
word for sin
And this is right and this is crime and this is life or
death
And he claims eternal happiness as the prize for well-
spent breath.
Yea some for coin forgive a sin and some for coin
will pray
And lift a soul from the pain of Hell to the light of
celestial day.

The sons of men are brother fools and their good
blood soaks the sod
Because their surpliced medicine men claim Allah is
not God,
Because the God of the buckskinned throng, the God
of the boundless plain
Is not the God that saved the world at the price of one
man's pain.
Because Jehovah is not Zeus and Christ is never Allah
Ten thousand million thirst in Hell or drink in old
Valhalla.

For what know they of the mitre better than that we know?
If faith of numbers telleth true to which faith shall we go?
There can be but one maker of the struggling sons of Earth,
There are different shades but not of blood and the same is their form and birth.
All men are equal before The God, greatest as well as least
Has the love of the One Great God as well as the best-taught priest.
So men of the wrinkled Earth stand up, bury the thirsting knife,
Know this, that you are brothers as one God gave you life,
Take you the Cross and the Crescent, the Unleavened Bread and the Bowl
With all the rest and bury them well in the deep sea's blackest hole,
Break ye the bonds that fetter souls to the long robes of a priest
And join in triumphant unison, the West with the ancient East,
From plain and wood and valley shout till the mountains nod
There is no God but one God and that God is our God.

?

Why stand ye on the mountain top, tip-toe, to reach
thy God?
Why lift thy voice that he may heed thy prayer?
Why look ye toward the stars to seek his face?
Know ye that God is there?
Within thy darkened chamber, upon thy bended knee,
Why whisper prayers with pale averted face?
Doth thy God dwell within thy petty domicile
To sanctify thy hiding place?
This God thou prayest to that heeds thy prayer
Is He an entity that thou canst own?
Or some vast spirit, incomparable, remote and infinite,
Not to be seen or known?
Is there one God without, within, above, below,
around?
Not all the temples on a thousand hills
Could make a habitation for the Infinite
Or priesthood alter what he wills.
Is God the spirit of the universe that actuates the
planets in their course?
The animating essence of all life the fountain head
and origin of force?
The cause and substance of all things that are, the
Present, Past and Future his long life,
Is everything, that is, a part of God, evolving destiny
the God like strife?
Is such thy God?

Athanasia

Eternal am I. From the very Prime
A part of Cosmos and a strand in Time.

I have glowed in the mist of a comet,
I have flamed in the light of a star,
I have spun round the Sun on a limitless run
And have traced endless space from afar.
I have floated in clouds o'er the mountain,
I have flourished as grass on the hill,
I have fed the lean pack that followed my track
And have lapped the warm blood of my kill.

I have posed as a rock, as a flower, as a brute
And now I can pose as a man,
I have played every part without choice, without art,
In a wonderful geodic plan;
A part of me is the Ocean, a part of me is the Air,
A part is Earth, a part is Fire and all of me is Prayer;
A prayer of joy and gratitude that in the present day
The elements that form me bound Love and Hope
with clay.

And when this act is finished and when this course
is run
I'll still be there as dust and air upon a clinkered Sun;
Waiting the call to action
Though cold as a fossil snail,
All of me eyes, all of me ears,
With a voice to answer the hail.
I will burst to gas and rage as fire
At the crash with a clinkered mate
And in the sky will flare anew
The sign of a deathless fate;
On, on through unnumbered ages to write the tale
again
Of a whirling cloud, of a shining star, of a world of
brutes and men.

A part of me is the Ocean, a part of me is the Air,
A part is Earth, a part is Fire and all of me is Prayer,
That through the coming ages the elements in me
May have the power in each great hour
To Love and Hope and See.

Gods

When but a child I had a god that mostly ruled at night
He held my soul by terror and his worship was of fright,
I never saw his features or heard his awful voice,
I never would have served him if there had been a choice.
He often hid beneath my bed or stood behind my chair
And I know his hands were frequently just clutching at my hair,
He crept beneath the sidewalk and could come through a crack
And I would be so frightened I would run and not look back.
He never did me any harm but then you know he might
And I enjoyed no safety but when mother held me tight.

The theology of childhood made me a trembling slave
For the bogie god would get me if I didn't just behave.

Then came a troop of brighter gods, companions of my youth,
They were human-like and natural and full of life and truth,

They were beautiful and perfect and almost house-top tall
And just about as pallid as the marbles in the hall.
They talked and loved and wrangled and did just as I did,
Their presence gave me pleasure, I was downcast when they hid,
They understood my longings and Jove the sky would smash
If I had to miss the circus because I lacked the cash.
They never answered any prayers but their sympathy was mine
And I think I kept them busy pretty nearly all the time;
Minerva'd frown and Juno'd pout and Venus just would prance
When I could not go with Nellie to the social and the dance.

But Oh, the gods of youth have fled, they hold adults in scorn
They have vanished like the hoar-frost in the sun of early morn.

And now another god has come. No man his face may see.
Like sunshine on the prairie, like mist upon the sea,

He fills the utmost heavens and his name inspires
with awe
For the title that men give him is inscribed as Cosmic Law.
I feel his ample power and am humble as the clay
Amazed at the achievements of his mighty yesterday.
I watch the stars rush flaming throughout the realms
of space,
I note the tiny hairbell flowering in the shady place,
I feel the sea a-breathing and sum the desert's sand
And am faint, exhausted, weary just to think that all
was planned.
I count for naught in import, I count for naught in
might,
I am only one of billions that have struggled toward
the light,
The Law provides my pleasure and if I suffer pain
It is because I cross the Law and I must try again.

Such is the god of my to-day and I but stand aghast
When I think the Future will disclose more wonders
than the Past.

I hear there is another God will cheer my latter day,
He'll take me by my feeble hand and lead me on the
way;

Or coming to me as I faint, above me gently bend
And turn the glass when wasting sands are nearly at the end.
But then comes a low whisper that all the gods are One
And the protean illusions show how well His will is done:
The timid childhood's bogie god just answered like a charm
To keep me safe and well in place and guarded from all harm,
The marble gods taught Beauty and Strength and Love and Life
And inspired me for the action of the future days of strife,
The mighty Spirit of all space, the God of Law and Light,
Evolved in me a wish to learn of everything aright.
When my old heart shall thrill with hope and know no thought of fear,
And when an angel tells me that happiness is near,
When the mirage of turrets prove that I no longer roam,
The rustle of a Gabriel's wings will hail the wanderer home.

Humanity and Destiny

Whence are we? Why and whither? is raised the human cry.
Why do we live? Why struggle? Why suffer and why die?
What is the goal we're seeking? What is the lofty aim?
Why in our breasts is quenchless hope that everlasting flame?

Man sits in meditation profound, prolonged and vain,
Man seeks to gain in merit through self-inflicted pain,
Man bows before his idols and man lifts high his gods
And spreads his sacred carpets upon more sacred sods.
There lies a fallen Moloch kissing a holy clod,
There is a ruined temple deserted of its god,
There is a broken idol, there an abandoned shrine,
And there a leaning Crucifix, the latest Hope of Time.
Below among the peoples a myriad hands they raise,
Some held in supplication and some in proffered praise
And some thrust forth in frenzy and some are clasped in prayer
And some are old and grimy and some are young and fair.
Some clenched in wild defiance, some asking to be led,
Some holding gold and jewels while some are begging bread.

A gloved one sways a scepter, a pale one holds a cross
And some wield bloody weapons and some are filled with dross,
And some are puffed from gluttony and some are shrunk from wine,
And some are strong and some are weak and some display no sign,
And some are joined in friendship and some are clasped in love
While a baby's hands in its mother's arms are lifted high above.

Above the throng of nations beyond all human ken
Where reigns the day eternal, beyond the thoughts of men,
There moves through light supernal on to the distant goal
The face of That Which Sees The End, That Comprehends The Whole.
Distant, unchanged, unswerving through ages past and gone,
Remote, unaltered, purposeful through ages yet unborn
The eyes of Destiny gaze calm upon the distant scope
And neither falter, fear and fail nor hasten, smile and hope.
Such is and ever has been and always will remain
With nothing that can lessen and naught that counts as gain,

With purpose full and final, determined and complete
The face of That Which Sees The End and knows
naught of defeat.

Seek not to solve the riddle, seek not to pierce that
ken,
Do but the best within thy scope and live and die
like men.
Not one is of great moment before that calm, set face
And finite man cannot define the welfare of the race.
Still this much has been granted, the ages write it
plain;
That which was lost was worthless and what survives
is gain,
The best shall never perish. The peerless wins a mate
And joy and smiles must triumph above the rule of
Hate,
That Worthy Sons of Worthies shall have worthier
children still
Until perfected Man shall stand on Time's remotest
hill.

Curtius

A LAY OF ANCIENT ROME

Listen, friends, unto a story of brave days of old
When a human heart and a human hand were valued
more than gold.

Why rush so fast the surging crowd
Adown the hillside shouting loud?
Is Rome on fire? What can it be?
Mayhap the news of victory
By breathless courier on spent steed
Draws forth the crowd from beds of need,
Where languishing in torturing strife
With fever burning out their life
The noble and the low now lie.
Perhaps a foe is on the way
Hoping that Rome in her dismay
At prodigy and curse and plague
May fall before their traitor league.
Perchance in panic, wild with fright
Their friends forgotten in the sight
Of the unburied dead so nigh
To those who only hope to die,
They flee the city, flee the might
Of gods that only reign to smite.

On toward the forum push the throng
Of mingled life, the weak and strong,
The rough, plebeian, brown with moil
As where the Sun on fruitless soil
Burns down and barren of the grass
Is cursed and curses all who pass.
The rich patrician dull with wine
Like some huge oak of Apennine,
That grows and towering towards the skies
Scatters its acorns where they die
Till smitten by the tempest's shock
It moulders useless on the rock.
The huge barbarian in whose grasp
Last eve was heard the dying gasp
Of that great cat whose spotted hide
In Afric's jungles oft is spied,
Pushes amid the struggling crowd
In civic garb with curses loud,
Onward they stream, a living sea
Of human life, the slave and free,
The great, whose brow in thought is bowed
And burdened with state cares, the proud
In jeweled garb a trophy brought
From Veii where some client fought
And mothers clasping close their child
Skirt the dense throng with faces wild.

Before the Vestal temple hear
The startling din of clanging spear,
Of clashing arms, of piercing cry
And see the smoke that rolls on high.
Twelve priests in arms, with shields of brass,
Whirl in wild dance and as they pass
With chanting song, each beats his shield
Till fainting all at length have reeled
To the rough stones and in their cars
Are borne away the priests of Mars.

In spotless robes a numerous band
Of youths, each bearing in his hand
A silver censor, gently swinging
And as they follow they are singing
To Mars, the terrible in war.

But lo, the priests, the rattling car,
The smoke of incense gently burning
Are passed as dreams and the great yearning
Of a cursed people looks on high
Where a great cloud hangs in the sky
And timid faces grow more pale
And bursting hearts scarce hold the wail.
A word of sympathy would free.

A silence reigns, all strain to see
The noble form, the troubled face
Of Sextus there on the judgment place.
The Consul, Sextus, hear the voice
The people's consul, the people's choice.

The pain, the despair, the hope, the dismay
Winged with that name arose on that day
A prayer to omnipotent Jove not to man.
A people looked up through a heaven-wrought plan
Of famine, of flood, of fever and worse
Of anger divine and the threatening curse
Of their city's destruction by earthquake and fire
To a mortal who trembled himself to aspire
To supplicate Jove, to search out and appease
With suitable offering the wrath that he sees.

Then Sextus rose from the curule stool,
The people hushed as he raised his hand,
His face was pallid, his hair was wild
And anxious the eye that had ever been mild
As he gazed with tears on the eager band.
"Comrades, Romans, the word has come
From far-away Cumae the message is here,
The gods that dwell o'er heaven's high dome
Have sent the word how to save our home,
So hark to the words of the Sibyl drear."
Then up stood Celer, the swiftest of men,
Great were the deeds this man had done,
He had passed his foes, crossed mountain and fen
Till he reached the dame in her fateful den
And he told how the sacred word was won.

"The night was dark save the lurid glare
That hung o'er the fearful mountain's crest,
The path was steep, the way was bare
And wild the rocks as hide the lair
Of the monster cat or the eagle's nest.

"Up and on we rushed apace,
I followed the flying feet of the hag
Through canyons as dark as the realms of space,
My only light was the witch's face
And the dull red glow of the topmost crag.

"O'er beds of lava she led the way.
Where a mighty chasm barred the pass
She took the leap without dismay
And shrieked a curse at my delay
When I faltered with fear like a timid lass.

"Up and on to a cave's dark mouth
Where in secret chambers she holds her spell,
Where the essence of life renews her youth
And the odors exhaled make her speak the truth
As they rise in clouds from a bottomless well.

"To an inner chamber she strode away,
The winding passage hid her form,
There she breathed the spirit of prophecy
And her shrieks the will of Jove convey,
This she screamed while the frenzy within was warm:

" 'The dearest treasure that Rome doth know,
Consider it long, consider it well,
Down deep in the chasm of death must go
While the crashing walls shall bury it low
And the thunder boom its knell.' "

In silence the multitude listened until
His words had been finished and speechlessly still
They stood as though dumb and silence was pain,
Like the lull in a storm that sweeps over the main,
Or the space twixt the lightning's bright blinding flash
And the fearful relief that comes with the crash
Of the thunder, they stood till a voice
That seemed scarcely human, gave breath to a choice,

"Gold!" it shrieked, as a miser might cry in a dream
And a shudder of terror swept wide at the scream
But the spell had been broken, Hope rose amain,
"Gold, gold," the crowd shouted again and again.

Sextus arose from his curule stool,
The people hushed and the wind blew cool,
The wavering cloud of sulphury smoke
That rose in a column and spreading broke
In a canopy dense o'er the neighboring slope
Seemed blacker grown. The chasm of death
Poured forth midst rumblings its pestilent breath
In ampler volume. Quiet once more
At the voice of the Consul succeeded the roar
That had burst like the surge of the sea in the shock
Where frantic it breaks on the black looming rock,
As the silence that follows the deafening roar
While the white spray falls flecking the green sinking
floor

Of the outrushing wave, such, such was the space
E'er he spoke. Each pallid face
Was strained with attention, a volume of prayer
Was sent up from the desperate multitude there
For friends, home, and nation, each upturned cheek
Uttered more in its muteness than pontiffs could speak.
"Friends, Gold has been chosen. The treasure of old
That was saved from the Goths is all precious gold
And lies in the vaults, bring it forth, bring it forth,
And tear yonder milestone of fabulous worth
From betwixt the firm stones and jewels as bright
As the stars of the heavens that glisten at night.
Bring them forth, bring them forth and the spirits
that sit
Provoked at our folly perchance may see fit
To smile on our offering and glancing benign
On our rich sacrifice refulgent may shine,
The plague cause to cease, the Tiber subside
And close the vast pit that is here yawning wide."

* * * * * * * * *

In his hand he upheld to their vision a gem
That was fit to have shone in a god's diadem.
Far, far in the East where the blue waters dance
Rocked by odorous breezes, a diver by chance
Found it deep in the sea and to Troy's ancient king
Sent it up as a gift and he in a ring,
To that hero, his son, godlike Hector of old,
Gave the jewel set deep in the ruddy bright gold
From Araby's mountains, and down through the years,
A witness of pleasures, a witness of tears,
A forfeit to monarchs, a gift to the brave,
A reward to his valor, he willingly gave
It up in his wild, anxious, patriot love
As a sacrifice worthy of thundering Jove.
To the chasm, that yawning a bottomless seam,
Poured forth its black column of sulphur and steam,
He strode and upon the dark brink of the trench,
Mid the shadows of smoke and the pestilent stench,
He stood for a moment, his white, upturned face
Encircled by clouds in that terrible place
Shone like the face of the dead on the wave
E'er it sinks to a watery, fathomless grave;
His hand was outstretched o'er the chasm of night
And the gem of the ages flashed last in the light.

A shudder as when through the sparkling sky
Sweeps a fierce burning meteor blinding the eye,
Man stands and awaits with short, bated breath,
The shock of its falling or worse still his death
And arouses himself from the swoon of his fright
To look tremblingly out on the bright, starry night.
So the multitude stood with pale, dewy brows,
Here whispering prayers, there murmuring vows
But no tremors of Earth, no rumblings deep
Add fear where they tremble or tears where they weep,
For the gift was not that in which Romans rejoice,
Grim, unsatisfied gods had rejected the choice
And with souls terror-stricken, hearts ready to burst,
They looked on the strange, smoking pit as at first.

* * * * * * * * *

On that dread stillness rose the clattering beat
Of horses' hoofs that flying free and fleet,
With clang of arms and with wild ringing neigh
Burst through the crowd and down the narrow way.
As that mad stream
That takes its source within a glacier's seam
Mid Alpine heights, twixt the high-polished wells
Of adamant leaps downward to the falls
An emerald flood, embossed with foam, the way
Broken with rocks bedewed with icy spray,
So came the steed and rider, men gave back
As where amid the carnage fierce and black
Some armored knight sheds awe
And from such might the startled soldiers draw
In terror off. On, on before the judgment place
He swept where Sextus with pale face
And parted lip watched his career and knew
That tall dark plume. It seemed but yesternight
That plume had passed him in the bloody fight.
Where the wild crags hang threatening high
Above the narrow pass and the blue mountains stretch
Aloft their noble heads, were shepherds fetch
Their flocks to pastures verdant from the gore
The fierce barbarian shed midst battles' roar,
He fought again, surrounded by the steel
Of foes triumphant, with his naked heel
Against the rock. As when the hunted boar
Midst rushy jungles trusts to flight no more,

He stood defiant and the cowering Gaul
Looked on their dead and feared themselves to fall
But toppled boulders from the rocky height
To crush the valor they had failed to smite.
As where upon some mountain side
Thunders the fearful, crashing slide
Of earth and rock, so down the way
Thundered that warhorse on that bloody day.
As the swift chamois, beaten by the wings
Of the strong vulture, panic-stricken flings
Itself to death, so to the whirling flood
Foes threw themselves and tinged with Gallic blood
It swept on to the main. His bleeding side,
Pierced to the vitals, poured a crimson tide
And fainting mid the heaps of dead he fell
While that dark plume the Romans loved so well
Nodded above him.
Hark, the rider speaks:
"Fathers and Tribunes, where broad Tiger seeks
Between our hills the sea, there I had birth,
You know me well. All public pain or mirth
You have experienced, in it I have shared,
However my comrades suffered I have fared
And through these years as in the years of old
Rome never gained one friend by using gold.
The things that to our city are most dear
Are the stout Roman's heart, his sword and spear."

As when the gloomy forests of the North
Lashed by the tempests, moan their answer forth
Or like the sea amid the rocks and caves
At midnight murmuring o'er the many graves
Of those who trusting found a waiting bier
Of coral reefs with shrouds of sea moss drear,
Such was the murmuring of the mighty throng
As low and constant and as deep and strong.
Each eye was strained where rode the valiant knight
Each warrior knew him, all had seen his might
Before proud Veii, in the lingering strife
His blade had dipped in many a hero's life.
Above his helm, around that jetty crest
A wreath of withered oak leaves hung at rest.
His face was dark save where a line of white
Marked on his cheek a trophy from some fight.
With sword and spear, in armor and with shield
He sat, the conqueror from the bloody field.
His voice was mellow as he gently spoke
Unto his steed that sniffed the rolling smoke
And cringed and trembled at the rumblings low
And champed and pawed and tossed the foam like
snow.

"Peace, Mars, no more we lead
The rushing host of charging steed
You'll bear me through red fields no more
Or fleck your snowy sides with gore,

Long have we labored, ever have we tried
In speed and arms to be the Roman's pride,
We offer now our gift to yonder hell
For our great love of Rome who loves us well."
Then to the sky all black with smoke above
He turned his face and to almighty Jove
Offered himself, his steed and his good sword
Which half unsheathing as he spoke the word
Startled the horse that leaping forward fled
Toward where the mighty column dread
Of rolling smoke and poisonous gas
Through the rent stones found ample pass.
Six fathoms 'twas from side to side
And spouting from its walls so wide
Burst a great spring and vapors white
Blent with the smoke eclipsed the light
Of the bright Sun, like that dark veil
That hung o'er Isis cold and pale
And her celestial frown or smile
Hid from the children of the Nile.
On fled the horse and shrilly, wildly neighed
With flying reins his rider's voice obeyed,
He stretched each sinew to the final task
His greatest, grandest effort, best and last.
On toward the fearful pit he madly flew,
At every leap ten strides he nearer drew,
His quivering nostrils dilate, tinged with red,
His ears laid back upon his haughty head—

Like a strange bark upon a foreign shore,
Unguided, lost, drawn onward mid the roar
Of a dark whirlpool, o'er the very brink
Topples a moment, then adown the sink
With sails all tattered and with stern unhelmed
Rushes into the vortex and o'erwhelmed
Sinks in the flood. The fearless steed leaped out,
"All to the gods" rang a triumphant shout.
Down, down they whirl but floating o'er the hell
A withered wreath rose, poised and slowly fell.
For a brief space were horror and dismay
When flashed a bolt that brighter than the day
Lit up the forum with its lurid light
Stopped blood mid vein and shone on faces white.
The lowering clouds above grew strangely bright,
The pit was silvered with the heavenly light,
Like gods the statues shone in that dread flash
When o'er the spot the thunder's deafening crash
Burst terrible. The forum rose and fell
The sacrifice had won, Jove closed the hell.

After Thought

The dreams of the Past but foreshadowed
The deeds that we do in the Now,
The dramas our Fancy has woven
Impelled us almost like a vow
And no work-a-day duties should hold us
So visions can never enfold us,
Let the Poppies of Youth deck your brow.

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